

HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN URDU

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The Panchatantra stories by Pandit Vishnu Sharma have been considered to be the basis of children's literature in most languages of India. But as far as children's literature in Urdu is concerned, it has depended on the Muslim Sufi saints, philosophers, social reformers, religious preceptors, children's poets and writers, who took interest in the education and development of children and wrote for children both in prose and verse. In the beginning, India did not have any regular system of children's education and their moral training. Children's literature grew side by side

with the development of culture and civilization and modern thought, and it underwent changes from time to time. Today, we have children's literature in Urdu in varied forms and colours. Along with text books, there are also lovely magazines that provide knowledge as well as entertainment to children. There are beautiful and entertaining books, big and small, which they can read in their spare time—books of stories, incidents, plays and interesting humorous articles. Children's literature in Urdu has always marched ahead, and great deal of attention has been paid to the preferences and problems of children.

Like in other Indian languages, in Urdu too, the pace of development of children's literature before 1857 was slow. But almost all important Urdu writers and poets for adults have definitely written something or the other for children and have made contributions to children's literature in some form or the other. That is why right at the beginning of the Urdu language, we find the poet like Amir Khusro paying special attention to Urdu children's literature. Even before 1857, Urdu children's literature had great poets and writers like Mir Taqvi Mir (*Mohini Billi Bakri Aur Kutta*). Inshaulla Khan Insh (*Rani Ketaki*), Nazri Akbar Abadi (*Rinchh Ka Bachcha, Kankavve aur Patang*) and Mirza Ghalib (*Qadr-name*).

After 1857, people, enlightened by new ideas, took more interest in children's mental development. Moral training of children was stressed. Important among those writers are Nazir Ahmed (*Chandpand, Muntakhab-Hikayat*), Muhammed Husain Azad (*Nasihat Ka Karan-phool, Airba Sehat* and text books), Shibti Nomani (*Adal Jehangir, Hubah Unmandi*), Altaf Husain Hali (*Mitti ka Diya, Hub-e-Watna-e-Majlis-e-Nisa* etc) and Maulavi Zaka Ullah (*Science books*). Along with Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, these people gave good literature for children. The result of

children's writing by these people was that many writers like Brij Nariayan Chakbast Lucknavi (*Subh-e-Watan*) Iqbal (*Bachche ki Dua*, *Hamdardi*, *Ek Gae aur Bakri* etc), Saru Jehanabadi (*Gulzar-e-Watan*, *Hubb-e-Watan*), Ismail Merathi (text books, stories and poems), Trilok Chand Mahroom (*Bahar-e-Tifli Bachchon Ki Dunia*), Hamid Ulla Afsar *Gahrare ka Geet. Bachchon ke Afsar*), Khwaja Hasan Nizani (*Chane Ki Sarguzashat*, *Diyasalai*), Jalila Khwaja Bano (*Chidiya ki Kahaniyan*), Hafeez Jalandhari (songs and poems), Mahav Siddiqi (*Balak Bagh*), Imtiyaz Ali Taj (*Bachchon ki Bahaduri*, *Gudgudi Phoolbagh*), Asfa Shirani (*Nagma-Haram*), Chirg Hasan Hasrat (*Khalifa Rahman*), Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum (*Jhiole*), Mirza Adib (*Ustaniji*, *Pahad ki Chori*), Azim Beg Chughtai (*Qasar-e-Sahara*) and other big poets and writers who wrote beautiful poems, stories and prose pieces for children that helped in their moral education and mental development. These writers, through their efforts, strengthened the roots of Urdu children's literature.

Jamia Millia Islamia was established in 1922. Dr. Zakir Husain, an educationist himself, felt the need of text books of knowledge for education and mental development of children. He encouraged many writers to write for children. He himself wrote short stories like "*Abbu Khan ki Bakni*," "*Kachhua Aur Khargosh*" and "*Murgi Ajmer Chali*".

In 1925, a children's magazine, *Payame Talim*, edited by Dr. Abid Husain, was started. Shafiuddin Nayyar (*Bachchon Ka Tohfa*, *Munni ke Geet*, *Tara ka Danda* etc), Ilyas Mujibi (*Chamar ki Sui*, *Devmar Ladka*), Abdul Ghaffar Modholi (*Chor Ladka*, *Bachchon ki Adalat Mein*, *Bachchon ka insaf*), Dr. Abid Husain (*Chabilla Billa Sharif Ladaka* etc), Prof. Mujib (*Aao Drama Karein*, *Ghatakhori* etc) Josh Malibabadi (editor, *Naunihal*, *Hindustan Hamara*, *Shaad Apini* and (poems), Qudsia

Zaidi (*Gandhi Baba ki Kahani*), Haseen Hassan, (*Bandarwala*, *Circus*, *Chameli*) etc, Abdul Wahid Sindhi (*Paan Khakar Table Bajakar Ram Nacha*, *Bachchon ki Kahaniyan*) Masood Husain Khan (*Kiran Se*, *Bangali Babu*) Rasheed Ahmed Siddiqi (*Sheikh Niazi*), Nurul Hasan Hashmi (*Nirali Ginti*, *Kyon-Kyonkar*, *Kaise*), Rais Ahmed Jafri (*Teen Saathi*, *Chhoti Apa*), Kausar Chandpuri (*Wafadar Dost*, *Mazdoor ka Anjam*, *Gaon Ka Mukhia*), Shujaz Ahmed Qayad (*Ladla Beta*, *Chhumantar Dhaga*), Muslim Jipai (*Bolti Ketli*, *Kala Dev*), Razia Sajjad Zahir (*Sultan Zainulabidin*), Aali-Ahmed Saroor (*Everest ki Dastan aur Nanga Parbat*), Hameed Hasan Quadri (*Meri Gudia*) and many others have put Urdu children's literature on a sound footing.

India had to face many problems since Independence to consolidate and build itself into a strong nation. Growing population, problems regarding health, education, employment, housing, food etc. were obstructing India's progress. Our leaders and other social reformers directed our attention to the solutions of these problems. There have been many political changes during the last 40 years. Chinese and Pakistani aggressions were aimed at pulling India backward. Literary creations in the Indian languages were affected by all these things. Stress was on working on solution of these problems through creating 'literature and preparing' text books for Indian children.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Zakir Husain showed special interest in children's literature. As a result, children's fairs, and children's book fairs, were organized and the National Book Trust came into existence. Along with education for children, Urdu children's literature—short stories, plays, poems, novels and other forms of writing laid stress on patriotism, harmony and love. Writers of children's literature in Urdu are far more in number

than in other languages of India. Krishen Chander wrote fantasies, science fiction and adventure stories for children (*Ulla Darakht* and *Sitaron ki Sair*). Yakta Amrohi (*Bandar Highschool, Dhenchuk Shora*) is among those renowned poets whose long poems are liked very much by children. The well-known story-writer Ismat Chughtai (*Teen Anadi*) has not lagged behind in writing for children. Salaam Machhli Shahri has also written brilliant poems for children (*Bhikharionka Korus*) and also short stories.

Qurratul-ain-Hyder (*Jin, Hasan Abdul Rahman*), Saleha Abid Husain (*Anuha Aur Kala Kuan*) paid special attention to Urdu children's literature. They have rendered foreign stories into beautiful Urdu. Shaukat Thanvi (*Goolar ka Phool*), Adil Rasheed (*Khooni Dakoo*), Kanahaiyal Kapoor (*Toffian Khane ki Tarkeeb*) have written as much for children as for adults. Jagannath Azad (*Iqbal ki Kahani*) has also written plays and poems for children. With Raja Mehdi Ali Khan (*Langdi Kitab, Sone Ki Bakri*), humour has blossomed into Urdu children's literature. Qateel Shafai has written children's poems with contemporary themes. A.R. Khatoon (*Saat Khiadi*), Iffat Mohani (*Nani Amma ki Shaadi*) and Attia Parveen (*Fakhta Shahjadi*) have written long poems for children.

Siraj Anwar has introduced new type of adventure stories, science fiction and fantasy in Urdu children's literature — (*Khaufnak Jajira, Duniya, Daudta Jangal*). Khan Mahbood Tarzi (*Jadoo ka Hans, Jadoo Ki Botal*) Mazharul Haq Alwari (*Fakir Shah, Jadoogar Ka Intaqaam*) occupies a special place among the writers of magic stories in Urdu.

Dr. Muzaffar Hunfi's writing is based on child psychology, love, jealousy and mischief that are common among children. Whatever he has written—stories, poems, plays—has all been for children. Zaki Anwar (*Lal Batasha*), Ahmad Jamal Pasha

(*Asmaniyakotta*) and Azhar Afsar have written plays and stories for children on various subjects. Kaif Ahmed Siddiqi (*Sadabahr Nazmen*) is one of those modern poets who have been writing lovely poems for children.

Akhtar Mushtaq Raheemabadi (*Pyari Nazmen*), Maqbool Ahmed Dehlvi (*Shahjadi Najma*), Mahmood Niazi and Mehdi Nazmi are children's writers equally respected in India and Pakistan. Gulam Haider symbolizes the importance of children's literature in Urdu. His most important work is his novel *Ghaar se Jhopdi Tak*. He successfully runs an organization called Bachchon ka Adabi Trust.

Bazmi Bharati (*Dhanak*) Shaukat Pardesi (*Ghukar, Pehchan*), Mehdi Pratap Gaddi (*Subah Azadi*), Kalika Prasad (*Raakhi Ki Keemat*), Anwar Kamal Husaini (*Baz Bahadur, Sone ke Mahal*), M. Nadeem (Robinson Cruso), Saifuddin Abad (Muhim), Khalik Ahmed Asharfi (*Phoolon Ki Devi*), Qadir Javad Premi (*Karne ki Baat*), Alakma Shibli (*Phool Angan ke*), Masooda Hayat (*Nai Bahar*) and Mahboob Rahi (*Ranga Rang*) and others have dealt with subjects of children's interest in their stories and songs.

This account of Urdu children's literature would remain incomplete without the mention of Faiz Ahmed Faiz (*Muniya ki Saalgirah*), Hayatullah Ansari (*Kala Dev*), Khwaja Ahmed Abbas (*Chacha Nehru Sitaron Ka sitara*), Gopinath Aman (*Hub-e-Watan*), Josh Malihabadi (*Meri Pyari Gudiya*), Khadija Mastoor (*Badla*), Shammul Haq (*Suhane Tarane*), Shamsheer Ratman Faruqi (*Kutta Billi Dilli Door*), Shujat Ali Sadelvi (*Raakhi*), Azim Amrohi (*Jhootha Sach*), Rafia Manzoorul Ami (*Khabar Rasne ke Tareeke*), Hasrat Jai-puri (*Bandar Nach Dikhaye*), Krishna Gopal Abid (*Jadoo Ka Marham*), Premvar Bastani (*Kasauti*), Zafar Payami (*Sitaron*

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scription money that we receive is not enough for our future programmes. Therefore, most reluctantly, we had to raise the AWIC membership fee as follows:

Annual membership from Rs. 50 to Rs. 75

Life membership from Rs. 500 to Rs. 750

Annual Institutional membership from

Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000/-

We are now taking up new responsibilities and we need more participation from our members and I hope all the members would give us a helping hand in future also.

Very soon we are activating our AWIC Book Promotion Project and this needs more co-operation from our members we hope to get whole-hearted support from all well-wishers.